

Partners in Service (PINS)

Summer, 2010

PINS brings together faith communities with human service agencies. We promote the resiliency and success of children and youth who have been the victims of abuse and neglect, ranging in age from infant to adult.

802 454-8304

www.dcf.vermont.gov/fsd/PINS
PINS@ahs.state.vt.us

Osgood Building 2
103 S. Main Street
Waterbury, VT 05671-2401

St. Albans District:

Trying to restart partnerships.

Burlington District:

Charlotte Congregational Church reports that the congregation filled 33 "Pamper Yourself" Mothers' Day baskets for Lund Family Center. Members also baked cookies for the Lund Center Bike Ride for Mother's Day and seven people helped with 4,000 pieces of mail for Lund's Mother's Day mailing. They are now concentrating on backpacks and totes for back-to-school.

Hartford District

Hartford area PINS churches are gearing up to do an annual school supply drive. Every year PINS churches donate backpacks and other school supplies for all of our children in custody and many of the intact families we serve. Supplies and backpacks are given away at our annual foster family picnic and while social workers do home visits. They provide both a positive way for social workers and families to connect and a boost for children as they start the new school year.

Resource Coordinator Courtney McGuire is heading back to school for her MSW this fall. Good luck, Courtney!

St. Anthony's Catholic Church, St. Martin's Episcopal Church and E. Corinth Congregational Church will collect school supplies this summer, distributed at August 19 Foster/Kin Family Picnic.

St. Johnsbury District:

We said farewell to retiring Resource Coordinator Bob Ranahan, and welcome Michelle Fox as the new RC.

Easter Seals Partner Sara McDanolds is moving out of the area.

Brattleboro District:

From Karen LaMorder, Resource Coordinator for the Brattleboro District: Ninety-two people attended our Foster Parent Picnic, enjoying the picnic, games

and swimming at the Vernon pool. That included foster families, foster children, prospective foster parents, Family Services Staff, and even our PINS partners from the Centre Congregational Church.

We raised \$940 from the raffle tickets! (with an additional donation!)

The money will be in the Children's Activity Fund and used for camp, school activities, and other seasonal activities.

I noticed a lot of networking - former Foundation and PRIDE (Foster Parent Training Courses) classmates met up again and new friends were made.

One Sunday in May I presented to my congregation (Centre Congregational Church PINS partnership) that there was a girl who was graduating from sixth grade who wanted to get a new dress and shoes but the family could not afford it. After the worship service I was approached by MANY people who handed me between \$1 and \$20. I collected a total of \$120.00. This money not only bought a dress and shoes for the girl, but I was able to use the left over money to buy another child a pair of MUCH needed sneakers!!! (From Lisa Keller, District Director, Brattleboro Family Services)

Potluck with our PINS partners is scheduled for September 8 at our offices!

Barre District:

A potluck meal celebrated the PINS partners and Barre Family Services staff coming together to honor PINS partnerships and to introduce the new District Director, Catherine Harris, to the congregational liaisons.

The Waterbury Center Community Church continues to collect art and activity supplies for O.U.R. House (One Unified Response), a safe and responsive location for child victims of sexual abuse to be interviewed and receive counseling. Flats of pansies were also donated and planted in the House's flower garden.

First Presbyterian Church of Barre responded within minutes to a request from Joan Rock, Resource Coordinator for the Barre District, for funding for a pool pass for one student who will be taking swimming lessons and for a pottery camp



Barb, Heather, and Judy

for another child.

First Presbyterian Church of Graniteville provided several grocery store gift cards for parents with children at the New Leaf Child Care Center of Washington County Mental Health, a therapeutic child care center. Later, they were able to help with funds for a family pool pass to give a family some visiting time together in a fun and normal setting.

The Community High School of Vermont was started to provide a high school diploma for young adults, 16-22, who are involved with the Correctional System. In the Barre District, teacher David Strong and social workers Heather Waterbury and Judy Brassard have partnered with Barre Evangelical Free Church for help with snacks, bus passes, alarm clocks, calendars, and graduation gifts. Last March, two members of the church attended the very moving graduation of five students who now have a real chance for success!

Here's Barb McMahon's report on the event: Dan Newhall and Barb McMahon attended the graduation ceremony for our PINS partner, Community High School of VT, and both found this very

inspirational. Hearing the five students and what they have come through to reach this high point was really amazing.



Dave Strong and graduates

Three students had been in prison for making very poor choices and had started taking classes while they were in prison. One student had become pregnant and left school

early. Her comment was "I want my daughter to be proud of me" so she had her baby and then finished her high school classes at CHSVT graduating with the class last Friday. The last student had dropped out of four or five schools because he could not concentrate on classes. He spoke of David Strong's (our PINS partner lead) commitment to seeing that he completed all his classes, holding him accountable and celebrating when he was successful. He said David made a real difference in his life. The founder of the CHSVT, Robert Lucenti gave the main address and spoke of how the school has gone from something that no one thought would work to a fully accredited school that now has over 1,000 graduates! BEFC gave each graduate a gift bag with

an alarm clock, date book, calculator, picture frame, and snacks. It was a very enjoyable event!

The Warren Church had their Annual P.I.N.S. Mother's Day Shower as part of the Mother's Day Worship Service and Brunch. Besides infant clothing, toddler-sized sweaters and lots of disposable diapers, we received several potty chairs from the New Hampshire manufacturer. We have scheduled our School Supply Round-up in late July in time for back -to-school activities in August. Even with the U.S. economy's downturn, the Warren United Church's congregation has not stopped supporting their P.I.N.S involvement and mission.

Waitsfield UCC also held a Mother's Day shower for PINS. These Mad River Valley congregations are quite a pair!

Christ Church Montpelier collected small toiletries (shampoo, floss, toothpaste, soap, bubble bath) that children could use in their transition to care or to help supplement the foster family's resources. This gave everyone a good motivation to clean out the toiletries brought home from hotels that were taking up space!

Barre Congregational Church helped out with a bed needed for a kiddo who was sleeping on the floor.

Newport District:

The Newport Office has continued to receive goods for kids from The Church of God and from St. Mark's Church this past month. We have received duffle bags with clothes for a first night in custody and personal care items, reports Deb Richards, Resource Coordinator.

Rutland District:

Deb Malette, Resource Coordinator reports: We here in Rutland District Office have been having a great time helping kiddos go to summer camp or start taking lessons in horseback riding, art or in the martial arts (all of this is to get a small taste of something really positive in their lives) Of course you know my feelings about summer camps and all of the benefits that result for not only our kids but for all concerned. Grace Congregational UCC church once again came through for us with a very generous donation to our Summer camp/Activity fund therefore I get to say "YES" to a lot of Social Workers and Investigators for both children in custody and for some who are not. This just one more tool in our toolbox to help kiddos have a great summer experience and get into less or even no trouble, so that we can help keep some of those families together. This also frees up some more of the VFAFA Children's Activity Fund for other districts

which may not have such a wonderful benefactor as Grace Congo.

District Director John Zalenski mentioned his introduction to PINS at a potluck, and his hope to reinvigorated the partnerships in the Rutland District.

Springfield District:

St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Chester has been very active the past few months. Robbie Wierzbicki, Resource Coordinator for the Springfield District, requested help for a girl who will be attending college in S. Carolina. The church donated funds toward a deposit for registration and dormitory housing. In March, the church held its annual Maple Fest Dinner, with proceeds going to PINS in the Springfield District. They are now busy collecting school supplies for children involved with Family Services and hygiene kits for children going into foster care.

For the Easter holidays we gave boxes of food staples and certificates to the local supermarket to 3 needy families along with Easter baskets for each of the 10 children in these families. In May we were able to assist a foster girl who was accepted to college with a donation towards her registration fee. In June the parishioners donated camp items, duffle bags and backpacks for children who

were going to summer camp. During July and August the PINS committee is collecting back-to-school items to fill backpacks to give to kids K-senior high school. We were asked by Robbie Wierzbecki for hygiene kits to have on hand in the office to give to kids entering the foster care system. In June we gave her 20 kits specifically for younger boys and girls and for teenage girls and boys.

St. Luke's was also ready to help a mother of four with a down payment towards a new apartment but then this mother decided to stay where she was.

Again the Board of Missions at the United Church of Bellows Falls created a giant Easter Basket (that can have a second life as a laundry basket) which was delivered to the students at Mountainside at Easter. A group of students also travelled to Bellows Falls to help wait tables at our annual "Sugar-on-Snow" supper in March. Most recently, we collected gardening supplies from the congregation for the students' annual vegetable garden.

Bennington District:

The North Pownal Congregational Church women are working on a "Pillowcase Challenge." We meet monthly to sew pillowcases to give to foster children with their Christmas gifts. This is part of the 1 Million Pillowcase Challenge.

<http://www.allpeoplequilt.com/millionpillowcases/>

For several years the Congregational Church of N. Pownal has been giving Christmas gifts to Foster Children. This spring the fourth grade class at Grace Christian School held a Bake Sale in downtown Bennington to raise funds for Foster Children. They raised over \$200 toward Walmart gift cards for foster children. Athena came and spoke to the fourth grade about foster care and how the money might help the children.

Morrisville District:

The Wolcott and Puffer United Methodist Churches gave two scholarships for camp at Covenant Hills.

Middlebury District:

N. Ferrisburgh United Methodist Church received a request this spring for help with a foster child who needed special clothing that had to be custom made and we did raise the funds for this.

General Information:

"Parenting Revisited" Learning from One Another" Kinship Care conference, September 9, Hampton Inn, Colchester. Check website vermontkinasparents.org for more information and registration directions.

New state-wide phone number for reporting child abuse: 1-800-649-5285

Mount Mansfield Unitarian Universalist Fellowship helps out a Kinship Family -- Sara Ward

During the long months of winter 2010 the Mount Mansfield Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Jericho learned that one of our families was struggling with health issues.

"Granddad" was suffering from an infection in his leg and it required that he be hospitalized for several weeks. As if this were not enough stress on his wife, they are also caring for their three grandchildren, ages six, three and eighteen months. The MMUU fellowship was happy to reach out to support them by setting up a rotating meal schedule, and the middle-school youth who belong to "Project Reach Out" provided volunteer child care assistance 4-6 times each week for about four weeks to "Grandma" assisting with dinner and bedtime. The youth from "PRO" each noted that this was one of the high lights of their year with the fellowship, volunteering to help out a family in need, truly learning the meaning of reaching out. MMUUF has a committed PINS program each year assisting with Christmas items for a family in need, but this year helping one of our own members was extra special, and rewarding.